

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, EI

SUBJECT: FONMIN GIVES BLUNT STATEMENT ON IRISH EC OBJECTIVES

SUMMARY: FONMIN'S ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT ALMOST ENTIRELY IGNORED RELATIONS WITH US BUT STATED EC OBJECTIVES FORCEFULLY. IRELAND INSISTS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND THREATENS TO OPPOSE EC SUMMIT UNLESS SATISFIED.

REVIEW OF CAP AND BRITISH RENEGOTIATION ARE SEEN AS TWO LEADING ISSUES DURING DUBLIN'S EC PRESIDENCY. FOR FIRST TIME, IRELAND IS SHOWING A TENDENCY TO IDENTIFY WITH OTHER

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EC SMALLS AS WELL AS WITH FRANCE.

1. DURING ANNUAL BUDGET SPEECH, FONMIN FITZGERALD GAVE A CHARACTERISTICALLY FRANK DESCRIPTION OF IRISH FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. HIS EC POSITIONS WERE MORE INDEPENDENT THAN ANY ADVOCATED BY IRELAND IN PAST. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, IRELAND HAS RELIED ON AN INFORMAL PARIS/DUBLIN AXIS. IT IS PROBABLY STILL IN EXISTENCE, BUT IT WAS LESS VISIBLE IN FITZGERALD'S PRESENTATION THAN A STRESS ON IRELAND'S OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE SHARED WITH OTHER SMALL EC COUNTRIES.

2. FITZGERALD BELIEVED THAT "NOTABLE FAILURE" OF COPENHAGEN SUMMIT AND OF PREVIOUS PARIS SUMMIT HAD DAMAGED CONFIDENCE IN COMMUNITY. HE STRONGLY URGED THAT THERE BE NO NEW SUMMIT IF IT WERE MERELY TO MEAN "A REPETITION OF THESE FAILURES." COMMUNITY'S INABILITY TO AGREE ON A REGIONAL (DEVELOPMENT) POLICY WOULD HAVE TO BE CORRECTED IF SUMMIT WERE TO BE MEANINGFUL: "A SUMMIT WHICH FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT EVEN ON REGIONAL POLICY MIGHT ONLY SERVE TO UNDERMIN CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY AND COULD INDEED WEAKEN THE COMMITMENT OF ITS MEMBER STATES." EXISTING PROPOSALS FOR REGIONAL POLICY WERE COMPLETELY INADEQUATE FOR IRELAND'S NEEDS.

3. WITHOUT SINGLING OUT RECENT FRENCH PROPOSALS, FITZGERALD SAID THAT IT WAS OF "VITAL IMPORTANCE" TO SMALL EC COUNTRIES THAT ANY NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION SHOULD NOT REDUCE THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION AS THE INITIATOR OF PROPOSALS.

4. FITZGERALD THOUGHT THAT TWO MAJOR ISSUES DURING IRELAND'S EC PRESIDENCY (JANUARY-JUNE 1975) MIGHT BE REVIEW OF CAP AND BRITISH RENEGOTIATION. IRELAND HAD AGREED TO REVIEW CAP BECAUSE SOME OF ITS MECHANISMS HAD NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY, BUT "WE CANNOT ACCEPT ANY PROPOSALS THAT PUT AT RISK THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE CAP." FITZGERALD HOPED THAT BRITISH WOULD REMAIN IN EC, BUT HE THOUGHT THAT IRELAND WOULD CHOOSE TO REMAIN A MEMBER EVEN IF BRITISH SHOULD WITHDRAW. THAT SITUATION WOULD, HOWEVER, "POSE SOME PROBLEMS FOR US" (THE UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE DAY).

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5. IN CONTRAST TO DETAILED COVERAGE OF EC AND A CATALOG OF ISSUES IN REMOTE WORLD AREAS, FITZGERALD'S SPEECH CONTAINED NO DISCUSSION OF POLICY TOWARD US (EXCEPT FOR PASSING PRAISE OF DR. KISSINGER'S MIDDLE-EAST WORK AND OBLIQUE CRITICISM OF US ROLE IN CHILE).

6. COMMENT: FITZGERALD'S COMMENTS ON PRECONDITIONS FOR SUMMIT COULD ALMOST BE READ AS A THREAT TO VETO FRENCH

INVITATION. IN PRACTICE, WE CANNOT IMAGINE IRELAND STANDING IN WAY OF SUMMIT ACCEPTED BY EIGHT OTHERS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT FITZGERALD IS WILLING TO JOIN OTHER EC SMALLS IN REFUSING TO LET MAJOR COUNTRIES RUN THE SHOW ALL THEIR OWN WAY. FITZGERALD MAY WELL MAKE AN EFFECTIVE FUSS ABOUT REGIONAL POLICY. IRELAND HAS A STRONG BASIC ARGUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, AND FITZGERALD HAS A TALENT FOR SAYING UNPOPULAR THINGS WITHOUT AROUSING RESENTMENT.

7. WE DO NOT SEE GROUNDS FOR SERIOUS CONCERN IN THE FACT THAT IRELAND'S 1974 ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT CONCENTRATES ON EC TO EXCLUSION OF US. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, AT THIS TIME IN IRELAND'S HISTORY, SHE HAS TURNED ALMOST 180 DEGREES EAST, AWAY FROM WASHINGTON AND TOWARDS EUROPE. IN VIEW OF CLOSE HISTORIC TIES, THIS MAY SEEM A REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE HAVE HAD MANY OTHER OCCASIONS TO OBSERVE THAT DUBLIN DEVOTES LESS ATTENTION TO ATLANTIC LINKS THAN MANY OTHER CAPITALS IN EUROPE. ABSENCE OF NATO TIES IS ONLY A PARTIAL EXPLANATION. POSSIBLY IRISH ENTHUSIASM FOR EC HAS SIMPLY LED TO AN EXAGGERATED SWING, WHICH, IN OUR JUDGMENT, IS CAPABLE OF BEING TURNED AROUND.
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